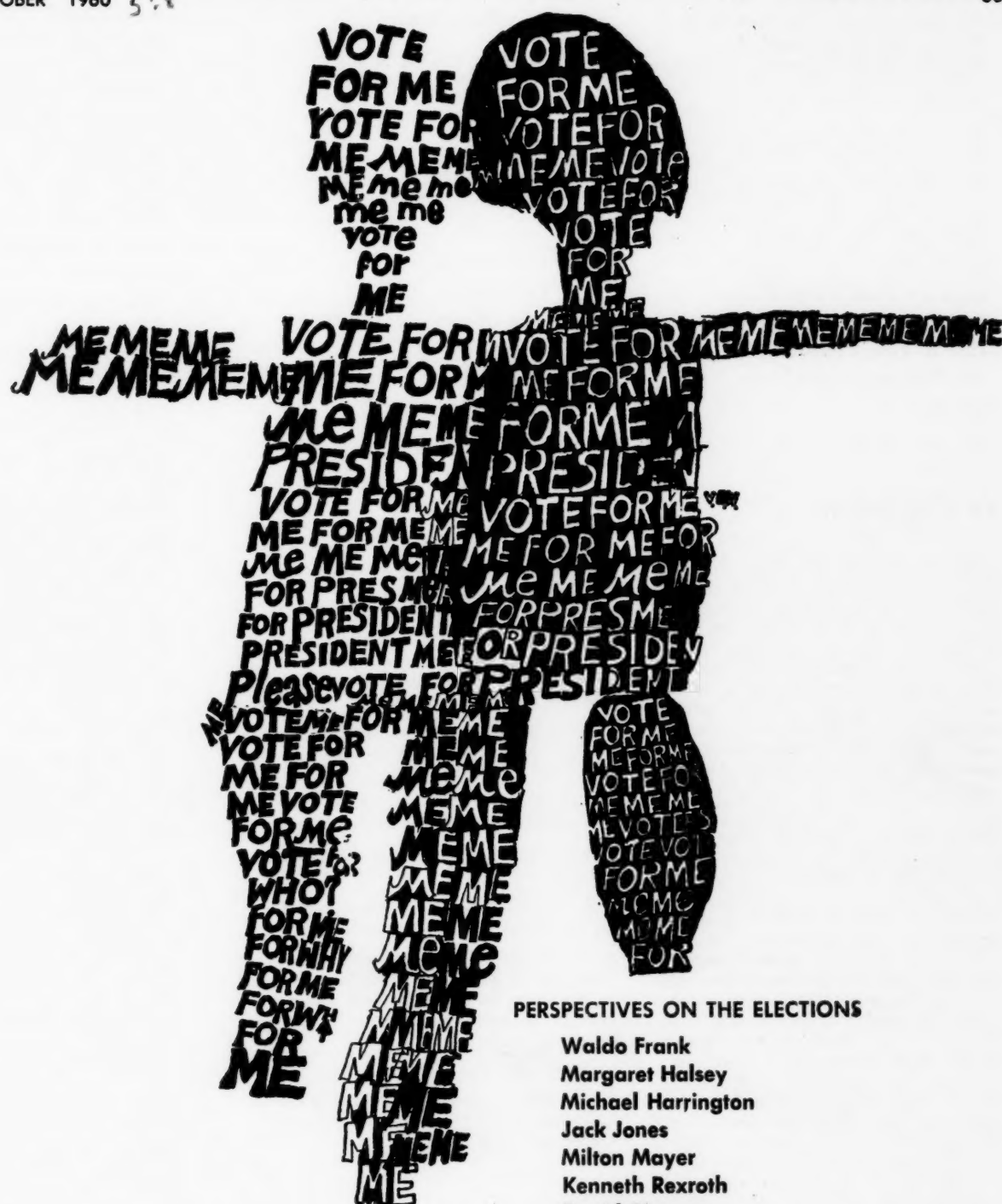


LIBERATION

OCTOBER 1960 5.8

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PERSPECTIVES ON THE ELECTIONS

Waldo Frank
Margaret Halsey
Michael Harrington
Jack Jones
Milton Mayer
Kenneth Rexroth
David Riesman
Harvey Swados
Norman Thomas

THE NEGRO VOTE

The Editors

LIBERATION AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY

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In This Issue:

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THE NEGRO VOTE

In articles and editorials *LIBERATION* has occasionally suggested that the drive of Negroes, especially in the South, for full citizenship rights, genuine equality, and human dignity had what might be called revolutionary possibilities. This movement could knock the props out from under the one-party system in the South. The sluggish and laggard labor movement could be greatly enlarged and at the same time develop a new social consciousness if powerful interracial unions were organized in the South. An America that had been made truly democratic by wiping out the scandal of discrimination and racism would undergo a profound cultural transformation; something would happen to its "soul," imparting to it a vision of a part to play in the nuclear age and an eagerness to play it, which the nation now so conspicuously lacks.

We suggested, however, that the realization of such possibilities depended upon whether the integration movement rooted itself in the Negro masses in the South, called on their strength and moved them into action (as has happened occasionally in Montgomery or in some of the student sit-in situations). It was essential that by virtue of a strong and dedicated leadership the movement look beyond immediate ends and token gains, that it seek a transformation of human lives and of Southern (and Northern) society by the courageous practice of the nonviolence which it professed.

Something certainly has been achieved. Those whites who have themselves worked for wiping out discrimination should not yield to the temptation to belittle the gains Negroes have made or begrudge them the satisfaction they derive therefrom, or minimize the price that a considerable number of leaders and many rank-and-file Negroes had to pay for such advances as have been made.

Perhaps it is still too early to say that the revolutionary possibilities will not be realized; but it is certain that to date they have not been, and that the prospects are not rosy. The point is vividly illustrated by what is happening in the current election campaign.

The fact that the integration move-

ment did not take on the character and proportions of a mass struggle, constitutes the background of what is now happening. A year ago, the integration movement was in the doldrums. The student sit-ins saved it but only temporarily (as we pointed out in the May issue of *LIBERATION*). Plans for mass direct action to secure voting rights for Negroes, clearly the responsibility of the adult organizations, never got off the ground.

The result of this lack of continuous, militant action on various fronts was that no pressure was exerted on the politicians of the major parties, and after the Democratic and Republican nominating conventions Negroes were confronted with the choice between Nixon and Lodge and the Republican members of the reactionary bloc in Congress, on the one hand, and Kennedy, with Lyndon Johnson, of all people, as his running mate, and the Democratic members of the reactionary bloc, on the other.

There are only two ways to react to such a situation. One is to raise a howl of protest that can be heard around the world, and to resort to genuine direct action on a local and country-wide basis. If the impulse to and energy for such action are lacking, the alternative is to play the game of politics, the terms of which have been laid down by the powers that be. That is what Negro leaders are doing, and for the most part the Negro people will follow their leaders, just as white folks follow theirs.

Some (like Jackie Robinson) support Nixon, and no one can deny that an argument can be made for Nixon as against Johnson. From where we sit, however, it seems clear that the Kennedy-Johnson ticket and local Democratic candidates will get most of the Negro vote.

The overall national strategy is to confront Kennedy, if he is elected, with the contention that the Negro vote in key states with big votes in the electoral college and in the heavily populated industrial areas, tipped the scales in favor of the Democrats. The demand will be made that he pay off by pushing for drastic modification of the filibuster practice, more concrete Federal government backing for registration of Negroes, etc. Along with certain labor and liberal Kennedy supporters, Negro leaders believe, or

at least hope, that Northern Democrats will break with their Southern colleagues and that the bi-partisan reactionary bloc will be substantially weakened.

The reference to labor and liberal groups serves to remind us that the leading Negro organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference depend to a very great extent on money from unions and middle-class liberal individuals and groups such as the ones represented in the Leadership Conference, which lobbies for civil rights. Negro leaders naturally string along with these elements when it comes to an election. A. Philip Randolph, true to his lifelong record of refusing to vote for capitalist candidates, courageously stood out alone in the A.F.L. - C.I.O. Council against endorsement of Kennedy. But almost all other officers of his Negro-American Labor Congress are men who hold jobs in unions which back the Democratic ticket. As a result, the Council cannot pursue an independent course.

In the North, where there are large numbers of Negro voters, the main objective is to see to it that there are more Negroes in the legislatures, in city councils, in judgeships, and so on. Jobs, in the existing party set-up meaning prestige and money rather than any desire to develop a new party, constitute the objective. From this point of view, making sure that so mercurial and disreputable a politician as Adam Clayton Powell has his seniority recognized and becomes chairman of the House Committee on Labor and Education becomes a great "cause." Incidentally, this precedent may complicate matters if liberal Democrats try to abolish the seniority rule to get rid of chairmen like Eastland and his counterparts in the House.

In places in the South where some Negroes have the vote, local considerations, rather than national objectives, also dominate. Even there, Negroes will tend to vote Democratic rather than Republican. In Birmingham, for example, increased Negro influence in the Democratic Party might result in City Marshal "Bull" Connor's being replaced with a more moderate scourge, and the importance of that can seem, to Negroes

living there, to outweigh remote objectives.

To sum up, "integration," to the articulate elements among Negroes, means integration into the dominant American culture and into existing political and economic institutions. It does not mean integration with rebel and potentially revolutionary elements for the reorganization of political and economic life and the transformation of culture. This basic factor accounts for the developments in the election campaign which we have described. In turn, the participation in the campaign aggravates this trend because it involves more Negro leaders of different ranks in different levels of political horse-trading. Even the students who carried on the magnificent sit-in demonstrations are sons and daughters of middle-class families who have money, but, as someone has said, "no nice places to spend it in." We understand that their coordinating committee is also planning now to concentrate on the voting issue, and this is likely to mean less direct action.

The gravely disadvantaged Negro rural masses in the South and among the urban proletariat in Northern cities could provide dynamism for more profound rebellion, but they, as we have said, have not been brought into motion. The result of all this may well be that organizationally a slightly reformed Democratic Party will become the main beneficiary of the Negro liberation movement.

One final observation: we have pursued this analysis of Negro leadership and people in relation to the election campaign without a single reference to the East-West struggle and the problem of nuclear war. This is a startling reflection of the fact that these momentous issues—involving the momentous issue of survival in the atomic age—do not enter significantly today into the thinking of Negro leaders. Insofar as they reflect on them at all, they do so in the same terms as do other moderate liberals. In spite of the "neutralism" of the new African nations, American Negroes go along with United States foreign policy, which is based on the concept of nuclear deterrence. Not a single top Negro leader is also a leader in radical American peace activity. In a movement whose watchword is nonviolence this fact is surprising and depressing. It is clear that pacifists have not convinced their

fellows by their own activities of the relevance, in political, economic and other struggles, of the practice of revolutionary nonviolence.

THE EDITORS

CAST YOUR WHOLE VOTE!

Republics abound in young civilians who believe that the laws make the city, that grave modifications of the policy and modes of living, and employments of the population, that commerce, education, and religion may be voted in or out. . . . But the wise know . . . that the State must follow, and not lead the character and progress of the citizen; . . . and that the form of government which prevails is the expression of what cultivation exists in the population which permits it. Emerson, *Politics* (1844).

The ignorant and unscientific Indian had one advantage over the twentieth-century American voter: the rain dance was bound to be followed, sooner or later, by rain. The unfortunate voter has no such natural law to guarantee that his periodic election ritual will be followed by a beneficial result. One can imagine the disappointment among some Indians on the years when rain came early and deprived them of their festival. It was no doubt because of their psychological need for the show that, in many tribes, the rain dance was held anyway as a celebration ritual. In 1960, a great many Americans feel cheated and let down because the transparent mediocrity of both Presidential candidates deprives them of the excitement and the sense of participation in important events that usually accompanies a Presidential election. It is only natural that we hear talk of write-in campaigns (though in most places write-ins will not even be tabulated), of "protest" votes, of begrudging and purely temporary abstentions, and of concentrating on Congressional campaigns as part of a long-range policy of working for political realignment (a prospect about as inviting to the election addict as it would be for the baseball buff to switch his allegiance from the Giants or Dodgers to one of their farm teams).

The four years since the last Presidential election have seen such stirring events as the successful culmination of the Montgomery bus protest and the wave of sit-ins by Southern students, but American Negro leaders are desperately urging their flocks to back either Kennedy or Nixon so

that Negroes too can play a role in the democratic process. (After all, Kennedy was only being realistic when he offered Lyndon a piece of the pie, and although it is true that Nixon signed a restrictive covenant when he bought his \$75,000 Washington home, he knew all the time that such agreements are "meaningless" because unenforceable in the courts.)

The last few years have seen healthy new stirrings in the anti-war movement, with several mass protest walks and significant experiments in nonviolent resistance at missile bases, germ- and chemical-warfare plants, and the Polaris nuclear-submarine base, but pacifist socialists participated in an unsuccessful campaign to get the Socialist Party (which has never come out for unilateral disarmament) to run a Presidential candidate, and other pacifists are passing the word around that radicals should vote for Kennedy in the hope that Adlai Stevenson will end up as Secretary of State.

Most of us need to feel that we have some control over the gigantic questions of peace or war, prosperity or unemployment, civil liberties or McCarthyism, integration or segregation. We have been told that the proper and effective way to exercise such control is by participating in the democratic process of campaigning and voting for political candidates, and we have hardly noticed that the people who sponsor this commercial will control the economy and culture regardless of who wins the election, provided only that we fail to exercise our more basic democratic rights of strike, boycott, conscientious objection, and nonviolent direct action. Is it of no significance that in every election, bank presidents, newspaper publishers, and other executives make impassioned appeals for everyone to vote: "Vote for the candidates of your choice—but vote!" Is it an accident that those who challenge the dominance of the military by such direct actions as refusal to serve in the army or to be herded into Civil Defense shelters are told that the proper ways to express their grievances are voting and writing to their Congressmen?

Over a hundred years ago, when national elections were less cut-and-dried than they are today, Thoreau was nonetheless able to observe:

Even voting for the right is doing nothing for it. It is only expressing to

men feebly your desire that it should prevail. . . .

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore or elsewhere for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of . . . men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? . . . But no, I find that the respectable man, so-called, has immediately drifted from his position, and . . . forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one . . .

As for adopting the ways which the state has provided for remedying evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. . . . Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. . . . If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose.

Waldo Frank has voiced the lament of many when he writes, in this issue, that Kennedy and Nixon are "men who wanted nothing *really* except to be President of the Republic." This should not come as a surprise to us, and we should not expect any fundamental change four, eight, or twelve years from now, if the state of the Republic remains unchanged. Increasingly, the presidents of our colleges, banks, insurance companies, and civic organizations are persons who would rather be president than stand for human rights. Politics has long been peculiarly susceptible to a kind of Gresham's Law by which bad politicians drive good ones out of circulation, and it is folly to expect the candidates for President to reflect a more healthy state or affairs than exists in our culture as a whole. Kennedy was only mirroring our society when he protested that he could not see why anyone would think that the religion he practises on Sunday morning would have any effect on what he does the rest of the week. Nixon is a member of the Society of Friends, with its historic tradition of pacifism, refusal to take oaths, or go to courts of law, but as one of his supporters pointed out, his Quakerism doesn't seem to bother him. Unfortunately, a country tends to get the leaders it deserves, and instead of bemoaning the unjust fate that has tendered us Nixon, Lodge, Kennedy and Johnson, we should ask ourselves to what extent they reflect conditions which we accept with barely a whimper in everyday life. If we are willing to sell

our labor to the highest bidder, support the union machine that rides roughshod over the rank and file, or be discreet in our support of radical causes so as not to endanger our status in college, shop, or neighborhood, we should not feel cheated to find Nixon and Kennedy heading the national tickets.

Perhaps it is a blessing that the candidates are so transparently what they are, instead of being sensitive and humane father-images, well-intentioned but powerless apostles of decency in human affairs who have been picked up by the machines to front for national policies of plunder and militarism. It is not easy to free oneself from the illusion of the electoral process as a method of standing for better things, of the idea that somehow representative government supersedes the responsibility of the individual for self-government in crucial matters affecting not only one's own life but also one's relations with one's fellows.

In our barbarous society the influence of character is in its infancy. As a political power, as the rightful lord who is to tumble all rulers from their chairs, its presence is hardly yet suspected. . . .

The antidote to this abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the individual, the appearance of the principal to supersede the proxy. (Emerson)

Hitler was democratically voted into power, but this obviously gave him no divine right to act as he did and put no moral burden on the German people to cooperate with his policies. The usual American answer to this is to argue that the elections were rigged. But there was more freedom in the German election of 1932 than there will be on November 8th in Mississippi, when the real political rulers will be rubber-stamped into their controlling positions in the House and Senate. (And how free were the Democratic and

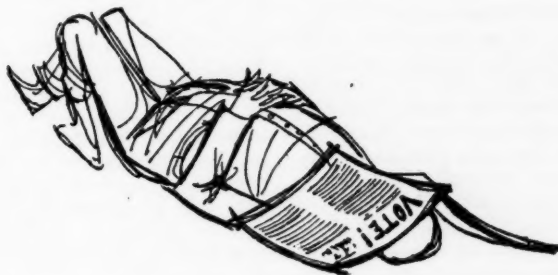
Republican conventions which named the only two Presidential candidates for whom Americans are "free" to cast a potentially winning vote?) It was an anti-Nazi German who wrote (six years before the accession of Hitler to power):

The bourgeois is . . . by nature a creature of weak impulses, anxious, fearful of giving himself away and easy to rule. Therefore he has substituted the polling booth for responsibility. (Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*.)

It may be argued that we have not reached the stage of Hitlerism and are not within six years of electing a Hitler—but we have reached the stage where we may destroy the world. Our proper concern is not with which candidates will win the election, but with what kind of populace they will find themselves trying to rule. Will they be able to collect the taxes, buy the men and women, and conscript the soldiers to carry on the Cold War and to maintain America's dying hegemony over the have-not peoples of the world? Will we hope that multi-millionaire Kennedy will push through legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$1.25 an hour or to "clean up" corrupt unions, or will we assert the right to strike, not only for adequate income but for democratic control over the nature, purpose, and function of our work? Will we wait on the government to legislate brotherhood or will we continue the activities of Montgomery and the sit-ins to the point where filibusters and deals become powerless to halt integration? D. D.

THE RIGHT OF NOT VOTING

There are two overriding issues facing the American people on the world stage: how to stop the spread of totalitarianism and how to prevent World War III. Other problems are aspects of these two major ones. This in no way minimizes the importance



of the racial question or the question of economic justice in the United States; it merely puts these things into world perspective. It is only by solving the racial question and the question of economic justice in a democratic way that the two world problems can be solved. There is no other answer to totalitarianism.

It is in this perspective that we see little or no significant difference between the two Presidential candidates. While both *talk* about seizing the initiative in the world and establishing peace, neither shows any awareness of what must be done concretely to achieve these results. Under either candidate, the arms race and the negative policy of merely reacting to bolder and more confident Communist moves would be likely to continue.

This is made clear in the case of Kennedy and the rest of the Democrats by their stand, or refusal to take a meaningful stand, on the racial problem. The choice of Lyndon Johnson to be next in line for the Presidency was a tacit reassurance to the old South that nothing really imaginative and courageous will be done to remove the principal sore in American life, which weakens democratic forces everywhere in the world. Kennedy is the prisoner of a family and a family political machine which is ultimately conservative and from which he never experienced even the emancipation of a Roosevelt. His Senate record is on the whole undistinguished, however garnished with a liberal veneer.

Nixon has impressed people who have observed him closely as a man of small ideas who has paid a heavy price in commitments to the business community for a too rapid and ruthless rise to power. He stands for practicality and caution in a more articulate, but less straight forward way than Eisenhower. He seems less callow than Kennedy, but even more opportunistic.

Some of our friends admit all this, but say that in an imperfect world we must make the choices available. They believe that they can discern some difference that really makes a difference between these two candidates. What, they ask, will be accomplished by not voting? Isn't there *always* a lesser evil?

Those who argue this way, it seems to us, are victims of three current myths: 1) an overestimation of the

importance of voting as such, regardless of what the alternatives are; 2) a belief that anyone who invokes the liberal rhetoric, regardless of where he stands in concrete terms on such issues as race or foreign policy, somehow deserves support; and 3) the belief that the present situation can be dealt with without a radical departure from tradition, even liberal tradition.

Voting, when it is meaningful, is a right to be cherished, and there *are* meaningful elections, for example some of the congressional races. But voting when the real issues have been obscured and evaded and left out altogether is a superstition unworthy of free people. Not to vote is then the most significant vote, and the numbers of those who do *not* vote should speak more eloquently than all the empty campaign speeches. It is particularly important that liberals learn to exercise the right of *not* voting, as a step toward bringing into being something worth voting about. In general it is time, and long past time, for liberals to give up their fuzzy-headedness and to insist upon clear issues and concrete proposals in place of the satisfactions of emotional "togetherness."

It should be a matter of much more serious concern that Communist leaders are so often more bold, more imaginative and more sure than Americans. The advantages of an "ideological" society are evident. But the answer is not to cook up some counter-ideology. It is to recognize and accept the moral implications of the ideas to which we pay lip service. We have to break out of the prison of what we consider "practical" and "realistic," which are only the names for the successful ideas of yesterday. We have to break the knots of fear and prejudice in our own brains in order to dare to be what will at first appear to be "impractical."

To object to voting which has degenerated into a meaningless ritual (precisely one of the things that is objected to about the situation in Russia), and to abstain from this kind of voting is not an abandonment of responsibility. It is an acceptance of it. When and if American politics reaches the point where enough people are driven to this position, they will be a force to be counted on and to do much to bring about a new honesty and spirit of courage in American life. R. F.

Lyric

how does water flow
between so slip of earth
and will of stone so clear
till, rushing, dark must go
how does water flow

how does water flow
between the broken breath
of sleeping ambered air
till, in steepest wind, it go
highghosted in breathless snow
how does water flow

how does water flow
when, near to hand or far
it sweetens bodies in the dust
till, downwelling, salt must go
how does water flow

how does water flow
between the shadow and
the sun, when we cast or no,
till neither clear nor dark it go
heavy with buoyancy so
does water flow

Gil Orlovitz

Poem for Field Piece: 3

aint it a fact
you always change your mind
after pulling the trigger,
irony always beats ya,
man, you can bet on it.
you are afraid
of some little bitty thing
you cannot see;
try and change it.
this time around,
it's the smallest:
an atom.

i tried.
i figured, later for
this bit,
and split.
within a thousand years
they dug me up,
and shoved a gun
into my hands.

for some reason or other,
i always get the ring
good for another ride

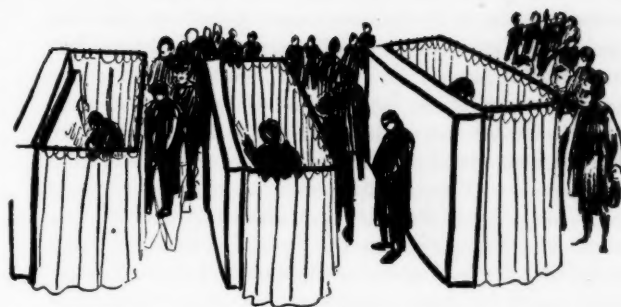
such luck should be reserved for christ

Carl Larsen

Liberation

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ELECTIONS

by NINE READERS OF LIBERATION



THE VOTE OF SILENCE

August 23rd

IF I VOTE, this year, I suppose it will have to be a vote *against* Nixon. Nixon, as a whole man, is non-existent. He is an incarnation of the lust for power. He wants to be President—and *finis*. He has no ideas that are his, no emotions, no intrinsic status. This personification of a *negation* has appeared before in contemporary politics. The most virulent example is of course Hitler, who might be called "the anti-Man." Nixon is not as brutal, not as extreme, not as ignorant, of course, as Hitler—the difference comes from the difference between our Republic, with its Great Tradition of democracy, and pathological Germany, tortured Europe. But Nixon is of the same family, made more mild by the environment in which he functions.

On the other hand, what is the alternative? A question-mark! a hope! Kennedy also is a power-man, a man who WILLS above all to be President. But he may well have other dimensions. The fact that he has men such as Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *et al.*, to help him do his thinking is a hopeful sign. The possibility that he would take with him to Washington such truly civilized men as Chester Bowles and Adlai Stevenson gives me heart. But what a bitter commentary on our condition, as a nation, that the loyal American who realizes the need of a true New World, if man is to survive, has no one to vote for!

August 31st: *I have almost certainly changed my mind—Kennedy's indecent assumptions about Cuba seem to put him in pretty much the same category as Nixon.*

ALTHOUGH the great quadrennial "Show" of the Republican and Democratic Parties corresponded to certain facts and values of American life, the methods by which the delegates were chosen and the Convention's business transacted were hardly conducive to the

selection of the *best possible* men to guide our great Democracy through the dangerous waters of the contemporary world. This voyage calls for fresh imagination, moral and intellectual power, above all spiritual courage; whereas the nature of the conventions seemed—barring accident—to condemn them to mediocrity and empty rhetoric.

True democracy means far more than the free privilege of voting for one candidate in preference to another. It means on the part of the people the capacity for choosing the men who represent the people's truest and deepest values . . . values which may well be contradicted by the whims and prejudices of the hour. To borrow from Freud, democracy is possible only in a people mature enough to transcend "the pleasure principle" and to act on "the reality principle" which may well contradict the former.

This of course is the great unsolved paradox of democracy as a political technique: the people can mature only if they exercise democracy and they can exercise democracy only if they are mature. As an example of the tragic problem, take the decades of the United States before and after our Civil War. Our poet, Walt Whitman, gives us a cruel picture of the kind of men who attended the conventions. The result of poor leadership was four bloody years of war and a method of "reconstruction" that crippled the South for generations and delivered the industrial North into the hands of ruthless and selfish "money men."

Democracy is a great and remote ideal to which every loyal son of the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the West must subscribe with heart and soul. Democracy is a challenge to maturity, for in the hands of the prevalent immature it begets demagoguery, the "freedom" of chaos, dictatorship and corruption. How far we are from immunity to these dangers the current political scene makes plain to see. The peril is not confined by any

October 1960

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means to the United States. But let us consider the present Presidential campaign as an example.

Enthusiasm is a manufactured "prop" of the conventions. It is timed, weighed, bought and paid-for. But its artificial nature, its synthetic "coldness," were discernible in both Los Angeles and Chicago. There were brief bursts of real enthusiasm at the Democratic convention—for Adlai Stevenson (whose votes were negligible); for Eleanor Roosevelt, a much-loved lady (who wept when Kennedy was chosen); for Mr. Truman, who has grown in the hearts of the American people (and whose advice was ignored). Also at Chicago, there were at least expressions of real esteem—for ancient Herbert Hoover (a museum piece from a happier world), and for President Eisenhower, whose job, the people know, is a hard one. There was no real enthusiasm—not for Nixon, not for Kennedy, not for Lodge or Johnson. No one loved them, no one enthusiastically wanted them. Every group in the country from liberal to conservative had a first choice, who for one reason or another could not win. Kennedy and Nixon were second or third choices all could agree on. And for months they had campaigned for votes with the intensity of an attacking Roman phalanx.

Kennedy had behind him an organized family with uncounted millions of dollars to enable him to fly about the country. Nixon, a poor man's son, had made a record in Congress that proved him acceptable to money. Both had machines fuelled by the naked ambition of two men who wanted nothing *really* except to be President of the Republic. But any sensible onlooker at the conventions and since could note the lack of warmth, the lack of positive acceptance in the people's response to these two men whose records have never for a moment transcended mediocrity, whose words have not once touched illumination.

* * *

The world is in the throes of a profound social revolution. Asia and Africa, the Americas and Europe, under the dual threat of over-population and suicidal war, seek salvation in a new Word which will lead mankind out of the potential shambles into a new world. These candidates, young in years, have nothing young to offer, nothing more *living* with which to answer the ruthless and tough-minded Mao and Khrushchev than bigger, faster bombs and hysterical words against what they call "communism," into the causes and nature of which they never stop to inquire.

No wonder they arouse no enthusiastic response in the American electorate. For the American people, stupefied by the false doctrines of a civilization based on overproduction for profit, may not *know* how to solve its problems, but it intuitively *feels* the human inadequacy of these candidates for power.

If I am right in these observations about the present

temper of the American electorate, there will be a *third class* of voters in this election. The first class will vote for Kennedy, preferring him at least negatively to the insincere Nixon. The second class will vote for Nixon for a variety of bad reasons. But there will be a third class *who will not vote at all!* Their vote will be a silence eloquent with sorrow and frustration.

In the past, the voter who liked and believed in neither party could cast a protest vote. He could vote for the Socialist, who at least rejected the ethic of capitalism. He could vote Communist, even if he deplored the crude methods of the Bolsheviks. His vote counted at least as a protest; and why not? There was no urgency for action to keep mankind from total extinction.

These alternatives are out. The Communist Party is virtually outlawed; the Socialist Party has become an academy for beginners. Perhaps it is just as well, since both groups were out of touch with the American people. But the result is that there is no alternative to the emptiness and void of the two major parties, except a silence—a silence packed with meaning.

The American nation faces its crucial test for survival. I do not refer to the menace of rocket-carried bombs, each able to destroy a city. I refer to the survival of the American Dream, of which Whitman and Thoreau were prophets, Jefferson and Lincoln the politicians. I refer to the dream of a revolutionized world, a true New World, in which the earth will at last be inherited by its people . . . mankind made "meek" by love and wisdom.

In this solemn present hour surely America's choice of political leaders is of immense importance. But the best American consciousness of this will be irrelevant to the real premises of the campaign: *the will of both parties to continue the old world and to change nothing fundamental*. The best American expression of consciousness of America's needs, and the world's needs, will be—politically—silence.

WALDO FRANK

POCKET OF RESISTANCE

UNLESS SOMETHING unforeseen happens, this writer is not going to cast a vote for President in November; and should this course be considered mere bad-tempered Stevensonianism, it may be added that there is nothing self-indulgent about the decision. Would that there were! To certain people, among them me, not voting is as uncomfortable as not cleaning one's teeth. Voting, like tooth-brushing, is something one has been deeply trained to do at all the proper intervals. But can there not be a higher duty, sometimes, than the seemingly obvious one?

Of course, we have all become familiar with the reasons why, *faute de mieux*, those of the liberal persuasion are supposed to swallow their misgivings and vote for Senator Kennedy.

"We can't let Nixon get into the White House!"

But quite aside from the circumstance that the well-trained voter wants to cast his ballot *for* somebody good, and not merely *against* somebody bad, the fact remains that it is not Nixon himself who is the enemy. The enemy is the Mechanical Man, and the Mechanical Man has already got his fleshless, skeletal fingers on the Presidency, no matter who wins in November. From the point of view of warm, human, honestly felt values, the Presidency is already lost; so why arbitrate, even to the extent of casting one vote, in a meaningless contest? Does not such a ballot—the doubts that accompany it being perforce unrecorded—merely reinforce the climate of fakery?

To be sure, there are those who, while conceding that the Democratic candidate himself is mechanical, pin their hopes on his advisers. If we cannot have real conviction and genuine belief at the head of the ticket, then perhaps those qualities can sneak in by the back door. There is something very quaint and old-fashioned about this sentiment. It reminds one of the Victorian theory that a drunkard can be reformed by the love of a good woman.

Actually, influence is a tricky thing and can run either way. The steadfast devotion of Bowles & Co., operating day in and day out on President Kennedy, *might* develop a streak of genuinely felt liberalism in that self-absorbed young careerist. On the other hand, is there not an equal possibility that Jack and Bobby Kennedy's opportunism and ruthlessness might rub off on the Schlesingers, Galbraiths and Commagers? Perhaps it does not signify, but as these lines are being written, the brooding presence of Harvard intellectuals has not operated to make the Democratic candidate for the Presidency cancel a scheduled appearance on the Jack Paar show.

Not to vote is an estrangement and a most uncomfortable alienation, and one tends to look for any shadow of an excuse to go to the polls. But Kennedy's appearance on the Jack Paar program shows up the impracticality of trying to vote for a man's advisers as a substitute for the man himself. Shortly after the Democratic convention, William V. Shannon noted in his syndicated column that the Democratic pros who swarmed on the Kennedy bandwagon believe the Massachusetts senator has "star appeal." "Star appeal" is closely akin to Eisenhower's "magic," and is defined as the kind of charm to which grandmothers, teen-agers and men not much interested in politics succumb in droves. If the Democratic nominee becomes President, he will presumably want to stay in office as long as possible. To what extent will that make him the captive of the jovial balloons who swarmed across the fence at Hyannis Port? (Not to mention the press, which with fine Republican impartiality crucified Democrat Acheson and played a major role in the nomination of Democrat Kennedy?)

Would that press and that public permit a President Kennedy to do anything so un-star-like as selecting Adlai Stevenson for Cabinet rank and steadfastly supporting him while he gave of his best in the role?

No, one is afraid not.

Kennedy's advisers are illustrious men; but relying on their future influence in American politics—given a President Kennedy—is like trying to chin yourself on a potato chip.

All the reasons advanced for voting for the Democratic candidate, despite unconquerable reservations, cannot hide one thing. They cannot hide the fact that for the next four years, no matter *who* wins, the Presidency is lost to anything remotely resembling idealism, dignity and inspiration. With the political arena totally enshadowed by that glacial—that almost unassimilable—reality, there is nothing that can be accomplished by voting. It only remains to ask whether anything can be accomplished—either for one's own *amour-propre* or for the cause of liberalism in general—by deliberately refraining from going to the polls.

* * *

In this country at the present time, two kinds of liberalism co-exist. One is the fake kind, which is all calculated postures designed to "please" this or that section of the voting public. The other is the personal kind that springs from deep feeling and is preoccupied, not with what is "pleasing," but with what is right. The first kind has become virtually endemic, and is practiced by everybody from Nixon to the class presidents of nursery schools. The second kind is most clearly exemplified by the kind of people who gave money toward a Hubert



Humphrey candidacy or worked and prayed in a far from encouraging newspaper climate for the nomination of Adlai Stevenson.

As between the two major parties, there have been a few star-crossed impulses among the Republicans toward a genuinely felt liberalism. For the most part, however, unposed and spontaneous liberalism has been identified

with the Democratic Party. It has existed among Democrats, to be sure, along with a huge percentage of alloy and dross; but it was nevertheless the factor which gave the Democrats their own particular character. They do not have that particular character today. Senator Kennedy at Los Angeles, with his "organization" and his first-ballot blitz, deprived them of it.

The question is, can they get it back?

It is futile to cast a vote for President in November—to go through the mockery of choosing where no real choice exists. There is, in fact, no use in thinking about the Presidency. For the next four years the Presidency will drift on the currents of history like the Marie Celeste, derelict and untenanted. It is not so much that the office will be in bad hands. Rather, it will be—from the point of view of nobility, scope and real dimension—in no hands at all.

But one serious thought remains for consideration. A Democratic victory in November would mean that the Democrats who are liberal out of strong personal conviction would never be listened to again. The Democratic Party would join the Republican Party in being that mere plaything of what somebody has called the Technopols—the new brand of politicians who are interested solely in techniques. On the other hand, should the Democratic nominee be defeated, the pros who saw him as a sure winner—and to hell with those village idiots who signed Stevenson petitions!—might be chastened men.

Isn't the defeat of their candidate the only thing that will restore to the Democrats their own particular character? Of course, one is certainly not going to work for the Republicans—wounded and immobilized though many Democrats are by what happened at Los Angeles. But I myself am willing to go so far as to suggest to the Grand Old Party a perfectly dandy campaign slogan to take the place of the famous "I Like Ike."

The new Republican slogan would read as follows: "Accept No Substitutes! Get The *Real* Nixon!"

* * *

Aside from generalized and public considerations, there are also personal and individual ones. And here, too, it seems as if a deliberate refusal to vote in the Presidential contest is, ironically enough, the only affirmative action left.

Like (I am sure) a great many other people, I have had more than one imaginary conversation with those pros at Los Angeles who were so highly praised by the political columnists for their "hardboiledness." In my imagination, I have often heard the pros talking about me when they got my Stevenson telegram.

"Oh, *her!*" they said, with the lip curled. "She won't vote for Nixon and she doesn't dare not to vote at all, so she'll come round. She's got no place else to go."

In my mind, I answer them.

"Gentlemen," I say, "If you had brought your candidate in on the fourth or fifth ballot, I could have thought that you seriously considered my preference and at length regretfully decided against it."

(Have I got their attention, I wonder?)

"But," I continue, "that first-ballot blitz was altogether too arrogant and contemptuous a dismissal. I refuse to let myself be held that cheaply."

I smile at them sadly.

"You miscalculated," I say. "You thought that with my political training, I would never be able to bring myself *not* to vote. And I admit it isn't easy, but you forced me into it. I've been compelled to improvise my own brand of passive resistance."

* * *

For a great many people this autumn the political scene is as irreducibly melancholy as a graveyard. Certainly there are as usual the magnesium flares of the candidates' smiles and the adding-machine clatter of Gallup polls. (Has anyone ever noticed that we with our polls are like Romans squatting over entrails to ascertain the shape of the future?) But over these customary trivia broods the aching sadness of the wrong path taken and the great chance missed.

Life has to go on, however, and the future must be thought of, even in the most melancholy circumstances. There is almost no room in which to maneuver, but the infinitesimal space available must be used to advantage. It will seem strange not to vote in a Presidential election, but the important thing is to sidestep the trap of seeming to endorse the fake liberalism when one's every instinct is committed to the real. In stubborn resistance to casting a ballot that is miles away from expressing the voter's real sentiments, one might perhaps fall back on an adaption of Sidney Carton's famous line.

It is a far, far better thing I do *not* do, than I have never done before.

MARGARET HALSEY

THE 1960 ELECTIONS PREDICTED

THE VICTOR in the 1960 elections can now be predicted with scientific accuracy. It will be the Ruling Party in a walk.

To be sure, the Ruling Party has not held a convention and it has no candidates. It will not appear on the ballot in a single state, and it will ruthlessly suppress any of its more ideological supporters who suggest coming out in the open. These peculiarities derive from the fact that the Ruling Party represents a tiny minority of the American people and would be crushed in a fair fight. Given this situation, its leaders wisely reject the sentimental trappings of American party politics (platforms, tickets, local clubs, etc.). They settle for political power.

The Ruling Party is, of course, the coalition of North-

ern Republican reactionaries and Southern racists. It approaches the 1960 campaign with an understandable confidence. In the 1958 elections, the Ruling Party was overwhelmingly repudiated by the American people. But then, after the speech-making subsided, the Ruling Party proceeded to pass the Landrum-Griffith Bill, to emasculate the Civil Rights Act, and to block effective health legislation for the aged. Then, in the August 1960 Congressional session, the Ruling Party turned in one of its most dramatic performances as it shredded the platforms of both Democrats and Republicans.

In this context, a vote for John F. Kennedy or Richard M. Nixon doesn't mean much. They are both minority-party candidates.

This is not to say that there is "no difference" between Kennedy and Nixon, or between the Democratic and Republican Parties. There is obviously a considerable distinction between them. Kennedy is the machine-tooled, bloodless and illiberal representative of American liberalism. He is supported by millions who yearn for social change, for a better life, for an end to the Eisenhower complacency. Nixon is the machine-tooled, bloodless and liberal representative of American reaction. Yet, if the candidates represent opposing forces and philosophies in a confused and sloppy way, neither of them is on record against the Ruling Party. Both seek its support. And this means that the 1960 elections are already in the bag.

This analysis follows a fairly familiar line of radical thought. But why, then, if we are so smart are we also so poor? Why is it that the intelligent (and sometimes dedicated, idealistic) leaders of the popular movements in America cling to a system of Party alignment which overweights reaction and makes a political minority out of the democratic majority? The answer to this question is important if there is to be movement in the direction of real change.

For some years now, American trade unionists, civil-rights leaders, and other representatives of the liberal majority, have concentrated their efforts on the secondary levels of power. There were, to be sure, ringing philosophic statements about basic issues, but these were, for the most part, ceremonial. The real dynamic of political commitment was in terms of influence over administrative boards like the National Labor Relations Board, or having the phone number of important Committee chairmen. The endless frustration on the primary level of power—the questions of war or peace, of civil rights and the allocation of resources—was accepted in the name of a *realpolitik* focused on subordinate issues.

This policy was consonant with (indeed, it was partly produced by) the decade of the Fifties: a time of relatively full employment, of McCarthyism and the "American celebration." One movement challenged this stalemate. That was, of course, the growing mass move-

ment of Negroes for civil rights. Since it raised basic and fundamental issues in the course of action, it became the most important force for political change in the United States.

Now, the Fifties have ended, and not just in a chronological sense. There is a growing crisis of the domestic economy, with automation producing dislocations which can no longer be dealt with in the old way. There is an uneasy, growing knowledge that the problem of nuclear annihilation must be faced, and quickly. The surge of the ex-colonial nations is breaking down old habits of thought. Indeed, as the Fifties came to a close, there was debate and a new concern among the intellectuals: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. called for a new liberalism, Galbraith attacked the squalor of social services in the "affluent" society, a few leading trade unionists spoke from the platform of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

But in the 1960 elections, there is no way to vote for change. Kennedy and Nixon both talk of the "new." Neither of them is in the old image of the politician. Both of them list the problems, sometimes even with a certain accuracy. This is the first reflection of the Sixties, an inadequate, confused, uncertain reflection. Yet at this point the Ruling Party need not be disturbed. No matter who wins in November, it will win. The new President will face Smith presiding over the House Rules Committee, Eastland in the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and so on.

In this context, I think it pointless to argue about what one does in the voting booth on election days. The overwhelming majority of American liberals will vote for Kennedy. A handful of radicals will make a moral gesture by voting for a splinter candidate. Others will abstain. Whatever they do won't make much difference. The real problem is to develop a structure of meaningful political action, to realign American politics.

We need, in short, a Second Party, one based upon the labor movement, the civil-rights movement, the urban middle-class liberals and the progressive farmers. For as long as liberalism is hopelessly compromised by its alliance in the Democratic Party with racism, as long as the New Dealers are yoked to the slave dealers, elections can come and go, but the Ruling Party will win every time. The only thing that reaction must fear is the power of the majority; and the only way the majority can express itself is through its own effective party, a political instrument capable of carrying out a democratic program.

For a long time, radicals felt that such a party would develop when the labor movement and other progressive forces left the Democratic Party and raised their own, independent standard. Until 1948, there was a strong minority in the unions which favored such a course (including Reuther and the United Auto Workers).

However, in the Fifties this sentiment all but died. Now, the likelihood is much greater that realignment will come about through a struggle *within* the Democratic Party. That is why it is so important for those who will (like this writer) effectively abstain in November, and those who will grudgingly vote for Kennedy, to focus upon the real problem: realignment.

The movement for realignment has two dimensions. On the one hand, it is furthered by the most militant struggle on specific issues like civil rights and nuclear sanity. On the other hand, the various individual battles must achieve a generalized, national political expression, a new party. It is the special and unique contribution of radicals in the Sixties to point the activity around issues in the direction of a general transformation of American political life, toward real debate and real choices.

As a member of the Socialist Party, I think that such a political realignment would be a step in the direction of basic change. Yet the Second Party of which I speak will almost inevitably not be socialist at its inception. It will be liberal, New Dealish, contradictory and unsure of its own nature. But it will also be a Party of, by and for the democratic Left in the United States, and that will be an enormous stride forward. Working for this eventuality is the important thing one can do in the 1960 campaign.

The winner of the 1960 elections will not be John F. Kennedy or Richard M. Nixon. The winner, as in the past and inevitably, until the democratic Left forces a realignment, will be the Ruling Party. Heads they win, tails you lose.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

NOTHING FUNDAMENTAL

ANYTHING to get Eisenhower out of there.

1) There is only one domestic issue: Negro rights. If the Democrats win, we will again be watching the familiar Southern shell game—here the Republicans (as some understandably fed-up Negroes believe) might do better.

2) As for foreign policy, this depends upon the point of view. I do not think that within the ideology of Progress "peace" with the U. S. S. R. can be had except in the sense they understand it—an eventual peaceful surrender of the West. Those who believe that the latter (with all its consequences) is better than continuing to try to stave off totalitarianism, while necessarily accepting the risks of nuclear war involved therein, may recognize in Kennedy's foreign policy advisers the elements of a possible transition toward the pacifist view. The Republicans are slower, if not altogether balking, about making way before Communist brinkmanship, and the risks of war naturally increase from this dilatoriness. In a word, as versus totalitarianism, the Republicans are a good deal more stupid (cf. Nixon's recent asinine pam-

phlet on Communism), but also more stubborn. The Democrats more intelligent, but also full of liberal confusions that will end in the totalitarian clarity.

The elections will not touch anything fundamental. I have maintained and reiterate that the only chance of avoiding both war and totalitarianism lies in transforming the meaningless argument between us and the Communists into a meaningful one, by reopening the fundamental ideological questions from which derive our daily politics. Were this done in time (but the possibility is remote) the Democrats might be a shade more receptive to new ideas. It is interesting that J. K. Galbraith is one of Kennedy's top advisers.

JACK JONES

WHY VOTE?

THE COMING ELECTION confronts us more sharply than usual with a question by no means new to us: Why vote? The Gray Flannel man is going to win no matter how anyone votes, and nobody whose vote is even going to be counted is running against him.

Among the pictures by which our American society lives—devalued pictures, but all the more fervently cherished for want of any others—one of the most fervently cherished is that of the Citizen Exercising His Citizenship at the Ballot-Box. Everybody knows that under Communism the slave has no choice; under Democracy the free man has the choice of Kennedy and Johnson or Nixon and Lodge.

What we fight for is Free Elections—not in Natchez or Barcelona, maybe, but assuredly in Nishni and Berlin. We fight for free elections because they constitute the proof of true citizenship, and once the citizen has (at terrible cost to himself) got up out of bed and crossed the street to cast his vote, American society requires nothing more of him. He is still subject, of course, to taxes, conscription, and fallout, but so are the slaves in the slave societies; so taxes, conscription, and fallout don't signify.

Something like half—sometimes far more—of our citizens honor this picture of themselves without crossing the street to get into it. They are just as happy having their Inalienable Rights as exercising them. The slaves in the slave societies don't even have the Rights. Where I die, in California, no Proposition after No. 12 has ever carried. Propositions require a majority of those voting, and those voting simply cannot be got to exercise their pencils beyond No. 12.

The American who doesn't vote, then, though he might be protesting if he were a slave in a slave state where all the slaves vote *Ja* (or *Da*), in a free society like ours is indistinguishable from the man who meant to get up out of bed and cross the street on Election Day but didn't get around to it.

On this one count, non-voting is evidently a dubious

form of outward protest. It may emanate from inward protest, which, as any fool knows, is more important than outward. But why not combine them and vote for me? I stand four-square, rock-ribbed, and copper-sheathed for National Growth. If you don't like me—and it is high time you didn't—at least vote for Sam Snakeweed or a yeller dawg, or for anybody unclad in the Emperor's new clothes of gray flannel.

It is hard to believe that anybody except a member of the Americans for Democratic Talk voted for Stevenson in 1952. If he did, he was sorry in 1956 and sorrier now. Mrs. Roosevelt is a nice old lady, but she wiped away the tear before it fell to her lap in the Los Angeles Arena, and smiled her biggest smile (which is saying something) in time to discover that the Democratic nominee, Kennicott, or Kennebunk, or Kennedy, is a nice young man and the man this country needs.

Stevenson did not even moisten. He headed for Hyannis Port at a fast canter to tell the nice young man that he was at his service. But he had to cool his worn soles on the porch until Chet Bowles emerged. Chet, on his emergence, revealed that what this country had to do was to be tough.

We are so tough now that we can't reach for our handkerchief without knocking over a friendly government misled by the gesture toward our pocket. Stevenson wants us to be both tough and friendlier; he would have us carry our increased weight more lightly when the weight we have is too much for even a slow waltz with the bear. His denunciation of the Republicans when the U-2 came down was based not at all on their unrighteousness, but on their "blunder"; as Khrushchev says, they got caught. Stevenson would have us be a graceful cyclops.

Who is voted for, and who isn't, doesn't make any difference anyway. The chairman of the Senate Rules Committee is elected by two, twelve, or twenty-two per cent of the adult inhabitants of his state, and he has much more power than any two, twelve, or twenty-two Senators elected by forty or fifty per cent of their constituents. The Presidency is—and must be—a great machine. It functions now without a President. It will function the same way with one.

What we need, and are not going to get, is a revolution. Norman Thomas used to call us to a revolution of the ballot instead of the bullet. He no longer calls. If you are going to vote *against*, vote against Norman Thomas. There is less rejoicing in heaven over the sheep that was lost and never found than over the ninety-nine that were not in the fold in the first place. The revolution of the bullet is also out: you have all you can do these days to keep the bullet from hitting you.

If you want to vote for somebody who has a chance of being elected, vote for Meyer, Kastenmeier, or Byron Johnson if you live in their Congressional districts.

Otherwise, vote for somebody unpleasant for local and state offices if anybody unpleasant is a candidate, and that is doubtful. Unpleasantness has become the highest virtue we could possibly hope for in a real candidate for public office.

But the big thing to do between now and Election Day, and especially after Election Day, is to promote the revolution this country needs. Don't ask me how, ye Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. It has been told thee, oh, man, what is good politically, namely, viz., and fo wit, to carry the campaign to the one voter over whom you have influence. And you know who that is.

Me, too.

MILTON MAYER

PEOPLE LIKE US

PROBABLY it doesn't make any difference though the slight balance of peace—the only real issue—inclines towards the Republicans. We know that behind Kennedy stand: 1) the race-sick South, 2) the Texas Wheeler-dealers, 3) the Catholic Church, 4) the "big-city machines"—a euphemism for organized crime, 5) the Irish, Poles, Hungarians, Croats, etc.—the rabidly anti-Russian half-assimilated national minorities—many of them from "captive nations," 6) the airplane and rocket workers and their unions with a vested interest in the Cold War—and still other groups who can hardly be said to be anxious for peace to break out.

Behind Nixon stand who? The major finance and industrial capitalists of the country certainly and the enormous welfare-warfare bureaucracy now in possession.

Intellectuals seem to think that because people who read Kafka and listen to Bach and/or Woody Guthrie enjoy prominence in Democratic ranks, "people like us" will keep the peace. Good ole Adlai will go to Moscow, quote Allen Ginsberg and Rainer Rilke to Khrushchev and they'll kiss and make up to the strains of Boulez. They forget that William Jennings Bryan—that indomitable pacifist—was Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State. Jacques Soustelle and André Malraux are two of the most thoroughly cultured gentlemen ever to hold public office—they are also two of the most unprincipled adventurers. I say this not to promote any Eggheads for Nixon movement, but to point out that the Democratic Party is hardly the peace party.

The other issues of importance are race relations at home and the starving and demoralized, recently "liberated," ex-colonial world abroad. Policy here is a matter of record. By and large it is a contest between Henry Mellon and Henry Ford II on one side and Papa Kennedy, the Wheeler-dealers, and Walter Reuther on the other. I do not see how I personally am involved—so as always since my 21st birthday—I shall stay home, not vote, and fool the sons of bitches.

KENNETH REXROTH

NOTES ON THE ELECTION

I DID NOT SHARE in 1952 and 1956 the passionate Stevenson mystique of many of my friends and colleagues. I felt that he responded bravely, gaily, and often admirably to events—but that he was usually their prisoner, largely reacting to what turned up, but too knowledgeable and perhaps insufficiently ambitious and self-confident for me to imagine him imposing his own hegemony upon events. I supported him, admiring especially his campaign against nuclear testing in 1956; and I joined again in his support late this spring, moved by his courageous response to the U-2 incident and the failure of the summit.

One consideration, however, made me hesitate this spring and still disturbs me: much of the pro-Stevenson and anti-Kennedy animus at Harvard and elsewhere in New England has a strong and unpleasant admixture of anti-Irish-Catholicism. This is ironical, perhaps tragic: for, as many Catholics realize, Kennedy is much more the Harvard patrician than he is a member of an obedient diocesan flock; and my own misgivings about him are based on his traditional patrician concern with America's "image" in the world, its "posture of strength," as in apparent adhesion to the misleading concern about the so-called missile gap.

That is only one side of Kennedy, however, and while I don't doubt his sincere, hence terrifying, belief in deterrence, he may also feel it to be a politically necessary emphasis, especially in the short-term forensic fray with such adept sloganeers as Nixon and Lodge. However, Kennedy is capable of shaping and anticipating events, willing to study and learn. While some of his announced advisers, such as Paul Nitze, have not dissociated themselves from the vindictive efforts of Truman and Acheson to show that their foreign policy is even more violent and dangerous than that of the late Dulles or the shelter-brandishing Rockefeller, many others (such as Ben Cohen) are genuinely concerned with disarmament; in contrast, Nixon has the support of Admiral Radford, who committed the Navy, against all its traditions, to "massive retaliation," and who was eager to use nuclear "tactical" weapons in Indo-China, and his academic advisers include some ferocious jingos. Furthermore, it is possible that Kennedy's war record and his Catholicism make him somewhat less vulnerable to the need to prove he is not "soft on Communism"; and, unlike Eisenhower (who, as a former general, could negotiate with Communist leaders with a modest immunity), any Kennedy efforts toward moderating the Cold War are not likely to be sabotaged by his press secretary's need to prove that his boss knows what's going on, including when U-2 planes are taking off. Kennedy can be appallingly truculent in carrying many big sticks and speaking loudly, but basically he is cooler than Nixon, who also wanted to use atomic weapons in Indo-China in 1954.

And Kennedy shares with Stevenson an appreciation of the problems and potentialities of the emerging nations (his interest in and sympathy with the Algerian revolution goes back a long way); unlike his father, his view of the world is not parochial.

I have been puzzled at the venom against Kennedy of many Stevenson supporters, not all of them anti-Catholic. I suspect that they don't like professional politicians unless, like Stevenson, they profess the amateur spirit. They may sense that under Kennedy the White House would be run, in part as serious business, in part as serious academy, but not as a salon, nor with the joking flair of F. D. R. or Stevenson. Given our present party system and the absence of viable humanist and socialist alternatives in the spirit of *LIBERATION*, I am inclined to prefer professional politicians, who at best can educate their day-to-day supporters even though they may have less appeal for the apolitical independents. Those who seek to be "above party" are at times attracted to men who make similar claims, such as Generals Eisenhower and De Gaulle, revealing a lack of faith in democracy.

Other, more bravely anarchic, independents insist both that the Republican and Democratic parties are alike and that Nixon and Kennedy are alike. This is a simplifying view; it undervalues important differences. The outlook of the dominant Republicans in Congress and in local government remains largely that of Main Street: small-minded, ungenerous, self-righteous, and apt to jump from isolationism to imperialism; the more sophisticated Rockefeller-type Republicans of the East have only an intermittent effect on this constituency, out of which Nixon, the small-town lawyer-prosecutor, comes. There are, of course, Democrats like this from the South (as well as more intrepid men like Kefauver and Governor Collins) and from some Northern urban strongholds of xenophobia. But most urban machine Democrats are not as afraid of ideas and of impulse as their Republican counterparts; their coalitions are larger and more inclusive, involving as they do intellectuals, labor leaders, and "Tory radicals" like Harriman, Stevenson, Franklin Roosevelt, Senator Clark, and, at least in aspiration, Senator Kennedy. Beyond all that, the election of 1958 brought into the House of Representatives a few extraordinary men who have joined several third-termers (James Roosevelt and Frank Thompson, Jr.) to found the Liberal Project, dedicated to a visionary politics at least nominally within the Democratic fold. Most of these men, including Meyer of Vermont, Miller of California, Wolf of Iowa, Kastenmeier of Wisconsin, Johnson of Colorado, were elected by small margins and face difficult or even "impossible" battles for re-election: Meyer, for example, is viciously attacked as a "dirty Red" because he opposes nuclear war, wants to bring China into the United Nations, and refuses to disown his pacifist son Karl. I would support Kennedy if it were

only to help these men, or a substantial number of them, return to office; indeed, if they do return, despite attacks on their voting records, their influence may grow.

From all indications, the election looks close. Paradoxically, the states of the deepest South where religious bigotry may be strongest are by the same token those where no one can yet dream of voting Republican, while those like Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina, with somewhat less entrenched Confederate traditions, can "progress" to the point where their hatred for Kennedy's liberalism and Catholicism can shine forth.

In this situation, it seems to me wrong to say it will make no difference who wins or loses. I shall vote for Kennedy.

DAVID RIESMAN

THE USUAL SPECIOUSNESS

NO ONE can tell before it takes place whether or not an election is going to make any difference. The question this year seems to be whether either candidate has given enough evidence of humanity and profundity to warrant one's taking the trouble to vote for him on the off-chance that he might be able to act effectively for peace and human rights.

Thus far I have seen no such evidence, and therefore I have no present intention of voting. I am impressed by the fact that others seem to share my opinion. Today's paper (*San Francisco Chronicle*, for August 17th, 1960) reports on a preliminary poll of voter intentions: "That 8.8 per cent should announce they will not vote for either major candidate seems to us an astonishingly high figure. It suggests public indifference toward the candidates and their platforms."

This may possibly change as the campaign warms up and a defenseless public is barraged with claims and counter-claims. But surely the most effective warning to whichever of the glib candidates is elected that his methods and attitude have not overwhelmed the electorate would be an unprecedentedly substantial rate of abstention.

The argument is already being advanced that it would be more worthwhile to vote for Kennedy because (a) Johnson as Vice President will be harmless; (b) Adlai Stevenson will be given a job; (c) there are important liberal intellectuals like Schlesinger, Galbraith, Cox, etc., in the Kennedy camp; (d) nothing could be worse than Nixon in the White House. I am not impressed by this reasoning, which seems nothing more than the usual speciousness which invariably precedes liberal cries of betrayal. Far more important is the fact that neither candidate has given any evidence of ability or interest in coping with the major social, economic, political, cultural problems of our age. They have both given considerable evidence of ability for individual advancement, an art at which this country has perhaps truly surpassed the rest of the world, and which it surely

does not need to demonstrate any further. I do not intend to aid either of them to achieve his ambitions, which do not seem to me to coincide even occasionally with the social interests of humankind.

HARVEY SWADOS

SUMMER SOCIALISTS

WHEN I LOOK at the present political situation I am frankly and immodestly sorry that I haven't a chance to vote for myself or, more accurately, to spread the gospel of the Socialist Party platform as a candidate. Nevertheless, I still believe that we Socialists made in general the right decision under the peculiar conditions of American politics, and that is to campaign for a platform rather than a man in the effort to bring about a meaningful political alignment in America. As for myself I am aware that age takes some toll and that I could not have carried out the schedule of former campaigns. I don't believe in nominating a man over 70 for President! I also think that we have to face the fact that the difference between more or less good or bad in Washington is of great concern to the struggle for peace in these critical times and must be faced in choices of candidates of old parties for President and for Congress.

This is by way of introduction to my pointing a moral. It is that the present nature of the American political system makes it ridiculous for "liberals" to think that they can wait to see whom the old parties nominate, and then, if disappointed, find a satisfactory person for whom to cast an effective protest vote. I am not complimented by the number of people who tell me at this late date how they would like to have a chance to vote for me. They have never done anything to make it possible to vote for me or any other Socialist. Some of these liberals belong to the school of those who in my previous campaigns voted for me in September but forgot about it in November. If ever there is to be anything more than a number of highly sectarian parties on ballots in pitifully few states, it will be because a great many people devote themselves to bringing about a new alignment through a strong third party without waiting until August of the election year. Then it's too late even to get candidates on the ballots in most states.

NORMAN THOMAS

KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE!

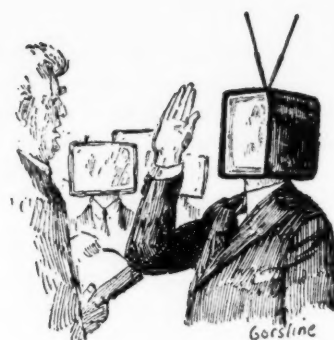
How does Nixon shape up against Kennedy as a sports enthusiast?

Answer: Nixon is a rabid baseball and football fan. His knowledge of current baseball players and the fine points of the game amazes athletes. Kennedy prefers playing touch football and boating.

20 Questions About Dick Nixon
Human Events, Sept. 22

This Is Your President

EDWARD BABUN



LOOKS LIKE Nixon and Kennedy made it this time. On the last page of Section 1 of the New York Times, we see each of them standing there with a beaming beehive-head at their respective sides, for none other than *Glamour* magazine. Kennedy is obviously the more suave of the two. Having been born into and married wealth, he is more inured to the presence of fashionplates and so stands there flashing a mouthful of polished teeth, in an attitude of blithe indifference to the young lady at his side. Whereas Nixon, poor boy that he once was, smiling that beetle-browed glower that can't help but look furtive, is manifestly less at ease. There is a note of boyish embarrassment to his stance, as if he had just stumbled into the ladies' room.

Any lingering doubts have now been dispelled. We have plunged full throttle into the era of Personability—and an unctuous personability at that. The issues of the forthcoming election do not, nor, given present conditions, can they shape up as disarmament, or a program for world-wide economic amelioration, or the realistic recognition of Communism's present status in Europe and Asia. The election will turn primarily upon who can present the most personable façade to the voter, who can maintain the most palliative and benign smile until Election Day, keep the Civil Righter in line with the Southerner, talk liberal through one corner of the mouth while mollifying the conservative through the other, and generally mesmerize the nation into a species of TV-induced and very torpid complacency.

If then, as seems to be the case, we are in for a popularity contest or a species of TV talent show, why not go all the way? Why hasn't some avid TV producer with a nose for the green seen the possibilities for the TV extravaganza of the fall season: "The American President." Hal March could emcee and Van Doren would no doubt be only too happy to have another fling at TV histrionics, in a sort of homey and chattily intellectual prelude to the grand event of the evening: Presidential election by TV voice vote. Surely our electronic geniuses could hook up a nationwide system

of noise-meters attached to TV sets everywhere, which, at the appropriate moment would register the people's choice on some gigantic scale set up on the White House lawn, for instance. What more suitable backdrop for reading the *vox populi* than the future President's residence? In the meantime, of course, much feverish preparation would have insured that the Presidential extravaganza were held at an opportune hour, i. e. running against some mid-week show on the rating skids. Much care would have to be expended, for example, in averting a disastrous clash with such perennial and immovable favorites as the Ed Sullivan show. Witness the courageous but abortive efforts of Steve Allen. In this manner a maximum of popular interest might very well be assured—as well as circumventing the admittedly great discomfort involved in ballot boxes, tabulation, etc.

Both candidates would be judged on the basis of personal appearance, vituperative-and-then-conciliatory talents, in addition to general all-around knowledge of American history. Nixon and Kennedy would then be called upon to render very personalized biographies, with the indispensable assistance of beaming wives and children, uncles, aunts, and maybe even a granddaddy or two, who would come traipsing onstage from strategic stations in the wings and behind the curtains. Then, after a word from the announcer, the candidates would return and face the nation.

In case of a close reading, Arthur Godfrey might consent to drop by in his helicopter and magnanimously declare a tie. Both candidates could then be declared President and allowed a good five minutes for mirthful back-pounding and bashfully sincere gratitude to one and all. Thus, far from being limited to ads for *Glamour* magazine, togetherness could be institutionalized at the very acme of our society.

The following morning, market research could check the show's rating and submit a confidential memo to the White House press secretary.

And so help put on an even better show four years later.

Report from Paris:

"WE TOO ARE SUSPECT"

SAM CORBIN

IT WAS A PARTICULARLY warm and sunshiny Saturday afternoon in Paris this May 28th. Tourists and Parisians alike were happily strolling along the spacious Champs-Élysées, when an unexpected sight caught their eyes. Calmly seated on the sidewalk was a motley group of several hundred citizens, displaying conspicuous banners that read: "Peace in Algeria!" and "No Concentration Camps!"

Suddenly a series of long blue police cars, filled with hefty cops, drove up and hastily unloaded their energetic passengers. After swooping down on the sitdowners (who did not budge), the police roughly slung them into the waiting trucks. Shocked bystanders at first cried out angrily against this sudden show of force, and when the sidewalks were finally cleared, gathered in excited little groups to discuss the burning questions that had caused the commotion: the continuing French war against the Algerian Nationalists, and the existence of numerous "internment camps" in France itself (as well as in Algeria) for the safekeeping of suspect Algerians.

This was but one of a series of similar demonstrations which have been organized in various parts of France recently by a newly formed group of unyielding pacifists, known as the Center for Nonviolent Civic Action. Inspired by the ideas of Gandhi and guided by a thoroughgoing philosophy of nonviolence, the group has set out to "awaken the conscience of the French people to the crimes that are being committed daily in the name of France." Its targets are: the Algerian war and all the repressive measures that accompany it; the "internment camps;" the atom bomb and especially its manufacture by France; conflict and irrational hatred in the relations of nation to nation and of man to man.

The basic orientation of Nonviolent Civic Action can be summed up in the following slogan: "Work for peace with the weapons of peace!" These pacifists seem to have taken quite literally the Christian injunction to turn the other cheek. They do not resist or cry out when the police rudely break up their restrained and dignified demonstrations. The result is always the same. The policemen drag the silent demonstrators away by main force, throw them into the wagon like so many sacks of potatoes, keep them in jail overnight, and let them go in the morning, sternly (and uselessly) warning them not to repeat the performance.

Nonviolent Civic Action is small but growing. Its most spectacular action to date was the silent demonstration of nearly a thousand people—including a good many schoolteachers, university professors, doctors and students—in front of an "internment center" for suspect

Algerians in Vincennes, a Paris suburb, on the 30th of April. Since then, they have carried out several smaller and equally silent demonstrations in front of the Ministry of the Interior in Paris. Frequently, they resort to such methods as hunger strikes—a technique which particularly appeals to the religiously minded members.

Underlying the remarkably gentle tactics employed by the pacifists is their desire to be as consistent as possible, by refusing to use violence in any form (even purely vocal violence) in their struggle against violence itself. These idealists are determined to keep their own hands free of the brutality and moral corruption so prevalent in the world around them.

Like every similar group, Nonviolent Civic Action has its hard core or human nucleus, which really keeps it alive. Thirty dedicated volunteers have given up all other ties to devote themselves exclusively to the task of "working for peace with the weapons of peace." They come from a wide variety of social and philosophical backgrounds, and agree only in their basic opposition to violence.

The majority of these volunteers are strong Catholics, but there are also six free-thinkers in the group, as well as one Moslem, one Jew, and several Protestants. From the occupational point of view, most of the "thirty" are intellectuals or of the liberal professions. But there are also five peasants and four industrial workers among them. Politically, the "thirty" belong to the general category of the "non-Communist Left," although most of them have no specific organizational ties. The Communists have had nothing to do with the movement.

The volunteers go up and down the country staging their demonstrations and doing all they can to arouse the population against the Algerian war, and especially against the "internment camps," where five thousand political suspects are held without trial or previous indictment. The thirty full-time pacifists are kept alive by financial contributions from sympathizers, since they have had to abandon their regular jobs in order to throw all their time and energies into their nonviolent activities.

The thirty volunteers periodically visit the various sites of the "internment camps," station themselves before them, and demand to be thrown inside. "We too are suspect!" they cry. They have even addressed several letters to the Minister of the Interior formally requesting to be imprisoned in the camps. "We would rather be the victims of injustice than its accomplices," they say. Their attitude—though seemingly masochistic—has a kind of bitter logic. It will remind Americans of Henry

David Thoreau, who preferred to go to prison rather than pay taxes in support of what he regarded as an unjust "slaveowners' war" in Mexico.

The present organizer and active leader of the thirty volunteers is husky, red-faced, mild-mannered Joseph Pyronnet, a high-school philosophy teacher in his early thirties. He has given up his job and left his wife and four children with a pacifist farm community in the South of France.

Pyronnet is a Catholic. He came to the nonviolent movement because he saw in it a meaningful way of applying Christian principles to real life. His natural sympathy for the underdog, and his desire to see the rule of reason replace brute force in human affairs—all this, combined with an intensely philosophical turn of mind, make him an energetic and fearless pacifist. Says he: "It isn't enough to believe in peace. You also have to do something to bring it about—you have to suffer and sacrifice for it."

Nonviolent Civic Action is extremely interesting as one reflection of a growing anti-war mood, which now goes far beyond the ranks of the pacifists themselves. For millions of average Frenchmen are becoming increasingly disgusted with the destructive and protracted Algerian War that takes their sons from them and absorbs great sums of money which could otherwise be used for the new homes and schools the nation needs so badly.

ANNOUNCING the second issue of . . .

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LETTERS . . .

More on Elections

Dear Editors:

New Orleans

Does LIBERATION plan to underwrite a candidate in the present election? It seems to me that with both parties running such impossible people, and with so many citizens not feeling represented in the least by either of them, it is high time to try again with a protest (third) party—probably organized as a write-in campaign.

Such a party would not plan to win, needless to say, but would provide a sounding board for opposition ideas on international issues and would build up as much popular support as possible with the hope of forcing the other parties eventually to steal some of its position. Through the conventional campaign buttons, etc. it would allow radicals an opportunity to air their views naturally and positively on campuses and other places until the election.

The Presidential candidate for such a write-in party should be someone who epitomizes clearly all that we stand for, and I can think of no one better than Martin Luther King, Jr. If advertised properly, it seems to me that he could muster a lot of votes.

How about the "LIBERATION" party running him?

Bob Currier

Dear Editors:

Jersey City, N. J.

Election Day is shared as a holiday by most people to give time for voting. Most people complain against the politicians and officials 364 days of the year, but on the 365th day, election day, these people vote for the candidate who support the very things they have been complaining against.

Harold Fackert

Dear Editors:

Urbana, Ohio

In his speech before the VFW on August 26th Kennedy said he was for strengthening our military might, "regardless of how much it will cost and regardless of how popular it will be." Previously he stated, "Our position in Europe is worth a nuclear war."

Nixon also favors increasing our military expenditures and has Edward Teller as his adviser for science and defense.

This year it is clearer than in the last few presidential elections that advocates of disarmament cannot vote for the major candidates. What then should one do?

1. Some ask why bother with the election when none of the candidates are satisfactory and it is almost impossible to get a minority candidate on the ballot. Surely it is our duty to those turning twenty-one, and to older voters fed up with the major parties, to let them know there is an alternative to voting for the two pro-military capitalist parties. Furthermore a presidential election is the best time for those with minority political views to get a hearing. The public is more ready to listen and opportunities exist in the mass media in many cases only once every four years.

2. Some believe the election should be boycotted. This of course is proper for anarchists. However they should realize that a boycott is not effective unless there is a very substantial (noticeable) decrease in the number of voters.

3. Some write in various names or the word Socialist. Probably less than half the write-in votes are counted, but the chances are they will be seen by at least one election official. Rather than writing in various names an agreement on one name with even a feeble campaign would be far more effective.

4. The logical alternative is to back one of the minor parties or form a new one. It is too late for the latter. The Socialist Party has no candidates this year. The Socialist Labor Party, be it a dogmatic sect, does have a platform acceptable to pacifists. It has an honorable history including opposition to both world wars. In 1956 the S. L. P. was on the ballot in fourteen states. The S. L. P. opposes government ownership as well as private industry. It advocates syndicals or revolutionary unions. This is extreme, but if we are to have disarmament we will have to have a fundamental change in our economy.

The main reason we do not have strong sentiment for disarmament is that the millions working in the military branches of the government and in defense-connected industries are afraid of losing well-paid jobs. Even if there should be agreement on disarmament the two capitalist parties would rightly fear that ending arms production would result in drastic unemployment.

An independent committee is being organized for Eric Hase and Georgia Cozzini, the S.L.P. candidates for President and Vice-President. It is hoped that we will awaken some of the politically minded radicals who have been going to sleep in recent years. Also it may serve as a nucleus for a new alignment after the election. Your support is invited.

Robert S. Auerbach
Acting Secretary

For Real Electoral Expression, 203 W. Water, Urbana, Ohio

Dear Editors: Sacramento, Calif.

Because I object to the people's being run, of the politicians, by the politicians, and for the politicians, I hereby announce my candidacy for the office of President of the United States, on the Eagle Party ticket.

Here are some of the planks in my platform:

No more testing of atomic or hydrogen bombs. No more flying over foreign lands uninvited.

Clean rivers and streams and protect them from further pollution.

Investigate long-range effects of sprays on our bird life and of chemical fertilizers on our soil's earthworms and beneficial bacteria.

Investigate schools that have been built in some communities at small cost and encourage and aid other communities to do the same thing.

Investigate why insurance rates and laws compelling people to invest in insurance increase, while insurance companies have vast holdings in real estate and investments.

Investigate basic causes of increase in mental breakdowns, cancer, and other degeneracy diseases.

Let the people plan their own foreign-aid projects for self-betterment. No money for armament.

Use the vast new knowledge of space for the betterment of mankind instead of its destruction.

Get more children into the country for the summer. Stop destroying their world!

Lucy Mayberry

"The Crisis in SANE"

Dear Editors: New York

May I say that I appreciate A. J. Muste's article on "The Crisis in SANE" (Summer, 1960)?

When I heard of the Abrams case (while standing on the corner of 72nd Street and Broadway collecting signatures for the march to the United Nations) I could hardly believe that Norman Cousins had in effect endorsed the actions of the Dodd committee.

I have learned the stories of a number of teachers dismissed from their jobs because they pleaded the Fifth

Amendment. But I had not expected a man of Mr. Cousins' reputation for integrity to follow the same pattern.

I wrote to the executive committee of the West Side group of SANE. My letter stated my position in much the same way that Mr. Muste has in his article. I have so far received no answer.

The motivation of the Congressional committees on subversion has been so plain—the latest example is that of Linus Pauling—so plainly directed against any politically unpalatable points of view, including those of SANE, that it seems, still, impossible that Cousins should have tried to appease them. To plead with Dodd to delay his charges! To take over the role of the inquisitor!

May I also say that I find the article by Carleton Beals intemperate in its attack upon labor unions and unhelpful to liberals in evaluating the Cuban situation.

Eleanor Taylor Nelson

Dear Editors: New York

After a careful reading and re-reading of Dr. Muste's article "The Crisis in SANE," I find myself in such agreement with his conclusions that I have nothing to add. Certainly no peace movement can succeed if it succumbs to attacks by avowed enemies of peace. And no organization should ask any member questions irrelevant to his performance for the aims and purposes of the organization.

Because there was little likelihood that SANE's national board would follow this sound advice, I resigned so that the "Abrams case" would not become the focus of SANE's activity but rather that the organization would give all its resources and energies to the fight for disarmament and peace. I have concluded it would be detrimental to the peace movement for me to join in a public debate.

Henry Abrams

Taxes for Destruction

Dear Editors: Minneapolis

It is sad to note in Part 23 of A. J. Muste's autobiography (April 1960) that the Fellowship of Reconciliation did not refuse to withhold Federal income taxes from the salary of Marion (Coddington) Bromley as she had wished. One could imagine many wonderful things happening had this been done at that time. Maybe there weren't enough bombs to blow us up at that time and just maybe there wouldn't have been that many bombs now, if . . . But that is the sad thing about institutions; however, I will go on contributing to the F. O. R. because it did introduce and educate me to the pacifist point of view.

So much for what might have been. What was, is. Hitler first raised the taxes on the Jews; then with this he made the ovens with which he gassed them. How different is it in the United States today, where we are taxed to pay for the weapons for our own destruction?

Mrs. Orin D. Doty

Tribute

Dear Editors: New York

Please accept my check for \$3 for my renewal. I had decided to drop LIBERATION from my list of magazines. However my conscience will not let me rest until I write this letter and forward the check to you. Even though I could never bring myself to adopt the "direct action" tactics which LIBERATION favors, your magazine does breathe some life into the petrified forest of American society. A subscription may be a convenient means of reducing guilt feelings, but it is also a means of expressing one's gratitude.

Ernest J. Leupp

This Christmas you can

BE GOOD TO YOURSELF!

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This Christmas you can give a friend (or even an enemy, if you are taking Christmas seriously this year) a lift by giving him a subscription to **LIBERATION**, and we in return, will give you something additional, which you can read with pleasure or give with pride.

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